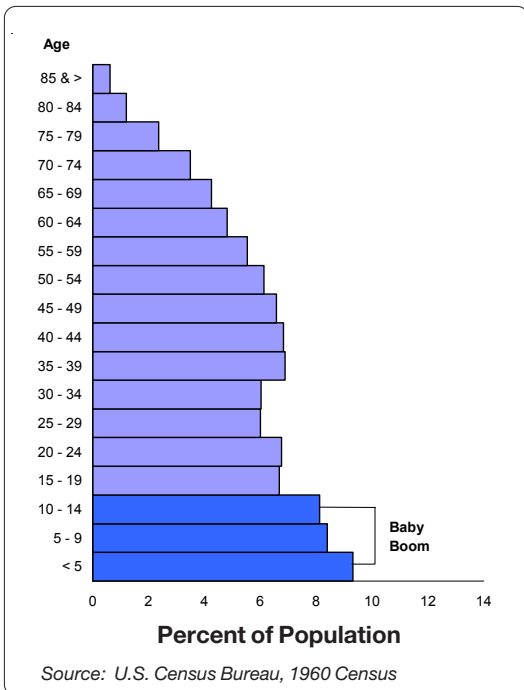


Demographic Snapshots

a monthly look at
Seattle's changing
population &
housing from the
City Demographer

Graph 1. Children Contributed Largest Numbers to Seattle in 1960



Changing Profile Shows Shift in Housing Needs

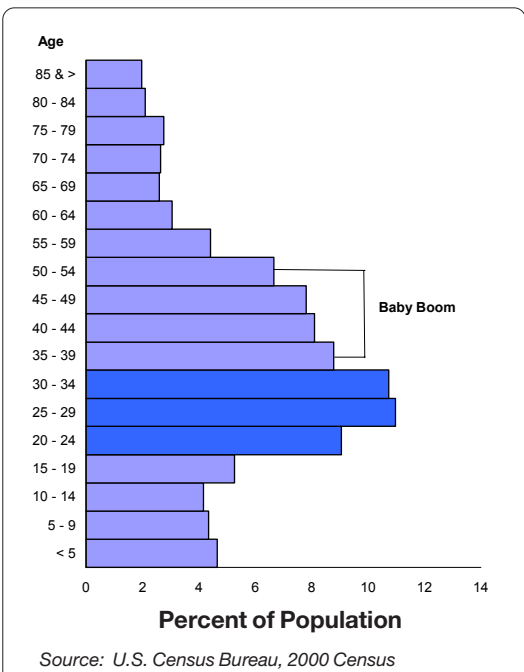
While Seattle experienced a slight increase in population between 1960 and 2000, the number of households grew rapidly. The city's population grew by just 1.1 percent during this time period, but the number of households grew 29 percent.

The 2000 census count showed Seattle's population had increased by only 6,287 since 1960, reaching an all-time high of 563,374. But large changes in the age makeup of Seattleites during these years mean that the demand for housing, and for particular types of housing, now differs greatly from the past.

Children Used to Dominate Seattle's Population

Like the rest of the country, children dominated Seattle's population in 1960. Known collectively as the baby boom, people born after World War II (between 1946-1964) overshadowed the number born before and after that time. **Graph 1** shows the ages of people living in Seattle in 1960.

Graph 2. Young Adults Contributed Largest Numbers to Seattle in 2000



Young Adults Now Largest Group, Due to Migration

By the year 2000 the baby boomers had reached ages 36-54, but despite their historically large numbers they no longer dominated the city's age profile as they had for four decades. Instead, young adults between 20-34 were the largest group (see **Graph 2**).

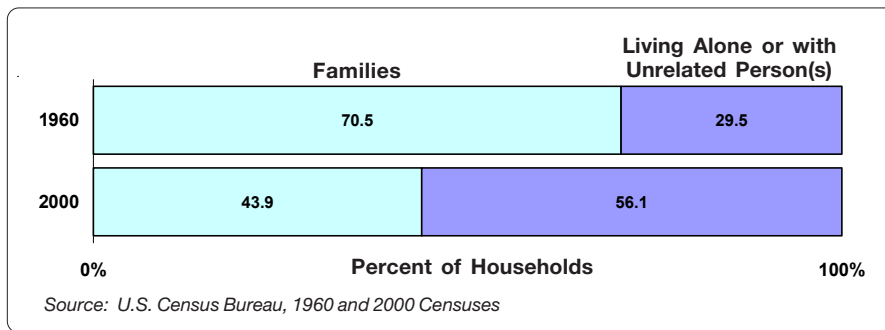
Spanning just 15 years, young adults numbered almost as high as the boomers, who span nearly 20 years. But, unlike the baby boomers in 1980 and 1990, Seattle's large number of young people in 2000 cannot be explained by an earlier spurt in births. Migration played a large role, as young people moved to Seattle for educational, employment, lifestyle, and other opportunities.

Children Playing Smaller Role

At the same time, children became a smaller and smaller share of the city between 1960-2000. One-third of the city's residents were under 20 in 1960, when the baby boomers accounted for all of those under 15. But by 2000, less than one-fifth of the city's population was under 20. In fact, of the nation's largest 25 cities, only San Francisco had a lower share of children in 2000 than Seattle.

See **demographic snapshots** on page 2

Graph 3. Change in Seattle Household Types from 1960-2000



“Our changing population characteristics and living choices point to a growing need for smaller, more affordable housing options.”

—Diane Sugimura
Director, DCLU

high level of homes that unrelated people share. Seattle is second only to San Francisco in the percent of households that are comprised of people unrelated to one another—15 percent. In 2000 only 44 percent of Seattle’s households were families, down from 71 percent in 1960. Families with children under 18 fell even more from over 33 percent to 18 percent.

Graph 3 shows Seattle’s mix of household types in 1960 and 2000.

These changes in mix of household types—fewer (and smaller) families and more people living alone or with people they are not related to—all contributed to a smaller number of people per household. The average household size declined from 2.70 persons per household in 1960 to 2.08 in 2000 (see **Graph 4**).

Legislation Being Developed to Address New Housing Demand

In a report released in August, the Seattle Planning Commission recommended that the City move forward with legislation permitting smaller single family units as a way to increase home ownership and accommodate new housing needs. DCLU has proposed legislation that would allow detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in single-family zones throughout the city. Legislation that would allow cottage housing—small single-family homes oriented around a common open space—is also in the works.

For details, see the September 2003 issue of *dcluINFO* or visit www.seattle.gov/dclu/codedev/housingchoices.

“We recognize that Seattle’s Land Use Code must keep pace with our changing demographics—smaller households, more people living alone, and an aging population,” said John Rahaim, City Planning Director. “DCLU will continue to use this important demographic information to inform our work to simplify and update the Code.”

For more information, visit the City of Seattle’s Population and Demographics website at www.seattle.gov/dclu/demographics or contact the City Demographer:

Diana Cornelius, DCLU, (206) 615-0483
diana.cornelius@seattle.gov

Graph 4. Seattle Household Size Declined from 1960-2000

